

Fall 8-15-1997

## ENG 3009C-011: Myth and Culture

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3009-11

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Office Hours:  
MW 11:00-12:00  
TR 2:30-3:30;  
or by appointment

**ENGLISH 3009C.011: Myth and Culture--Syllabus**

August

- T 26: Course Introduction: Contexts and Frames  
R 28: Overview of issues and ideas

September

- T 2: Joseph Campbell, The Hero's Journey (film: BL304.H45x.vid)  
R 4: Overview of issues and ideas (continued); "Archetype"
- T 9: Claude Levi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning (MM): "The Meeting of Myth and Science"; "'Primitive' Thinking and the 'Civilized' Mind"; "When Myth Becomes History"
- R 11: Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth (LM): "The Place of Language and Myth in the Pattern of Human Culture"; "The Evolution of Religious Ideas"; "Language and Conception"
- T 16: Clifford Geertz, Local Knowledge (LK): "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought"; "Found in Translation: On the Social History of the Moral Imagination"
- R 18: Discussion: Comparison of perspectives and methods: interpretive anthropology (LK), structuralism (MM), archetypal (MLB) and symbolist (LM) approaches to myth studies. Assumptions and experience--student premises for developing working definitions of myth, religion, history and science. What world through whose eyes?  
Writing: Journal responses; working definitions (1-2 pp)
- T 23: Middle Eastern Mythology  
Readings: Sproul, "The Enuma Elish" (91); "Creation of Man by the Mother Goddess" (114). Geertz, LK: "Common Sense as a Cultural System"; "Art as a Cultural System."  
Discussion: Mesopotamian (Sumerian and Babylonian), Egyptian, Ugaritic and Hittite mythologies. Types of myth--ritual, origin, cult, prestige and eschatological concepts. Diffusion and disintegration of myths. Anything familiar here?  
Writing: Journal responses; short essay--analysis of one myth, using perspective in LK, MM or LM--2-3 pp.
- R 25: The Epic of Gilgamesh  
Readings: N. K. Sanders, The Epic of Gilgamesh  
Geertz, LK: "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections of the Symbolics of Power." Cassirer, LM: "Word Magic."  
Discussion: The quest for immortality. Friendship with the "other," the 'wild' man. Searching for power, the power of the search--heroic identity through struggle. An early flood myth. Death, sleep and the uses of the dream and the name.

**T 30: Greek and Roman Mythology**

**Readings:** Philip Mayerson, Classical Mythology in Literature, Art, and Music

**Discussion:** Cosmogony and Theogony. Allegorical and "natural" deities. Prometheus and Zeus. Matriarchy and Mycenaean culture, patriarchy and Dorian culture. Zeus and counterparts in other religions. Hera (Juno), Poseidon (Neptune), Demeter (Ceres), Persephone, Apollo, Dionysus (Bacchus), Artemis (Diana), Athena (Minerva), Ares (Mars), Aphrodite (Venus), Hermes (Mercury), Hades (Pluto), Orpheus, Perseus, Heracles (Hercules), Daedulus, Cadmus, Oedipus and Theseus. The uses of cultural legacy-gender, class and art. What are the games of gods?

**Writing:** Journal responses; short essay--compare one god to a contemporary leader or analyze a contemporary event from the point of view of a Greek myth, 2-3 pp; identification and short essay examination.

October

R 2: **Greek and Roman Mythology** (continued)

**T 7: Native American mythologies**

Poetics of orality and literacy (handout)

R 9: "Native American Oral Narratives" (handout)

T 14: "Acoma Pueblo origin myth" (handout)

R 16: "Winnebago trickster cycle" (handout)

T 21: The Mission (film)

R 23: Discussion of myth, culture and colonization

T 28: **Hindu mythology** (Introductory concepts)

R 30: The Mahabharata (film)

November

T 4: (continued)

R 6: (continued)

T 11: (continued)

R 13: (continued)

T 18: (continued)

R 20: (continued)

**Thanksgiving Recess**December

T 2: **African mythologies**

R 4: Sproul: "Dogon: The First Words" (49-66).

T 9: Review

R 11: Review

**Final Examination: Wednesday, December 17, 12:30-2:30 in CH318**